

THE  
**FUTURE  
OF  
AMERICA'S  
NATIONAL  
PARKS**

First Annual  
Centennial Strategy for

# New River Gorge National River

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



**Site:** NERI

**Year:** 2007

**Vision Statement**

In 2016, New River Gorge National River is the centerpiece of a seamless and protected network of natural, cultural, scenic and recreational resources, both inside and outside of the parks' boundaries that epitomize the rugged grandeur and diversity of Appalachian river gorges. These thematically-related places tell the stories of our shared heritage, like coal, railroading and recovery, reflecting southern West Virginia's most cherished history and values.

Because solid partnerships exist between the National Park Service (NPS) and neighboring communities, travelers stopping outside park boundaries are sure to learn about nearby NPS sites and programs. The NPS works in cooperation with the National Coal Heritage Area, State Parks, and other stakeholders to provide a broad array of recreational opportunities to a diverse base of visitors. Connections between the Gauley, Meadow, New and Bluestone rivers are enhanced via designated trails and scenic roadways.

Local citizens are proud to have the NPS as a neighbor and assist in showcasing their heritage. The park's volunteer program is popular: all ages can participate in meaningful ways to benefit resources and visitors.

NPS inventory, monitoring and recovery programs for native species contribute to broader efforts to restore or maintain healthy ecosystems. Other regional authorities establish measures that transcend park boundaries to safeguard and improve important resources such as water quality and scenic vistas.

New River Gorge National River is a model for other places recovering from industrial uses and is increasingly valued as an oasis of wildness in the Eastern United States, a bastion of historic preservation, a spiritual reservoir, and a refuge for rejuvenation, challenge and reflection.

**Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager**

Don Striker, Park Superintendent

Site: NERI

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

By 2016, NERI, GARI and BLUE provide nationally known whitewater, hiking, biking, horseback riding, climbing and other recreational uses to a diverse base of visitors. Campgrounds, trails, river access and other facilities support high quality experiences for visitors.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NERI

STEWARDSHIP

☒ **Improve the condition of park resources and assets.**

☒ **Rehabilitate high-priority historic buildings to good condition, and help communities to preserve their history through programs like Preserve America.**

By 2016, Nuttallburg and Kaymoor are stabilized, open to the public and interpreted so that they can tell their nationally significant stories. At least one of the park's historic farmhouses has been restored to period condition and is interpreted to the public. Through innovative public-private partnerships, regionally significant historic structures at Thurmond and elsewhere are rehabilitated, adaptively reused and producing income to offset the costs of their maintenance.

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☒ **Restore native habitats by controlling invasive species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.**

By 2016, native species predominate, key animal species like the peregrine falcon have been successfully reintroduced, and invasive species, such as kudzu and Japanese knotweed, are controlled in the parks.

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☒ **Improve the natural resources in parks, as measured by the vital signs developed under the Natural Resource Challenge.**

By 2016, natural abundance, diversity and productivity of aquatic, riparian and forest communities is strengthened.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ **Complete all cultural resource inventories for designated priority resources.**

By 2016, national register documentation, historic structures reports, and cultural landscape reports are completed for the parks' nationally significant coal and regionally significant railroading, timbering and early settlement resources.

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Site: NERI

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Set the standard of excellence in urban park landscape design and maintenance.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Park visitor centers and other buildings continue to showcase native plant gardens that provide opportunities for the public to learn about the many benefits of landscaping with native plants.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NERI

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

By 2016, the parks, the National Coal Heritage Area, and other local and regional resources together tell the stories of southern West Virginia's rich natural and cultural history, including its transformation from a self-reliant agrarian to an industrial society; the social, economic and environmental effects of its role in fueling the nation's Industrial Revolution of the late 1800's, which greatly altered the traditional patterns of mountain life; and the parks' role in continuing recovery and protection of the area's natural and cultural heritage for future generations. The park continues to acquire properties that increase our ability to recover and protect outstanding natural and cultural resources and landscapes, watersheds, viewsheds, and visitor experiences.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NERI

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Serve as the Preeminent resource laboratory by applying excellence in science and scholarship to understand and respond to environmental changes.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

By 2016, the parks' large, contiguous forest blocks exhibit a range of elevation and moisture gradients where natural processes predominate and diverse and abundant endemic and rare plant and animal communities are present.

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Site: NERI

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Encourage children to be future conservationists.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

By 2016, the NPS and its educational partners operate place-based conservation learning centers, providing a broad range of programs and learning and research opportunities for school children, college students and scientists, combining classroom learning with hands-on field activities in the three parks.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NERI

ENVIRONMENT

☒ Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

☒ Establish programs to showcase exemplary environmental practices and increase visitor awareness of how the practices apply to their daily lives, as measured by surveys.

At NERI, where unfragmented forest is a fundamental resource, exemplary design means that visitor use facilities are located on the forest block periphery and facilities along the river corridor are sited, designed and operated to have minimal impacts on the riparian zone.

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☒ Serve as a model for energy efficiency, under Executive Order 13423, by ensuring Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards.

Park facilities are designed with LEED standards in mind.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NERI

RECREATION

☒ Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level-federal, regional, state, local-to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

By 2016, NERI, GARI and BLUE are the centerpiece of a 'National Rivers' trail system that connects the parks to gateway communities, state parks and historic sites, and each other.

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Site: NERI

RECREATION

☒ Establish "volun-tourism" excursions to national parks for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

By 2016, NERI, GARI and BLUE, the NPS has created a multi-faceted volunteer program that allows many different user groups, including recreationalists, traditional users, and others, to make meaningful and long-lasting contributions to the protection of natural and cultural resources, quality of visitor services, maintenance, ecological and archeological monitoring, and educational programs of the parks.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NERI

EDUCATION

☒ Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The park's outstanding sequential, curriculum-based Outreach Education Program continues to provide ranger-led, in-school and on-site curriculum-based programs, curriculum-based water resource programs, and on-and off-site park-related programs, Teaching with Historic Places curricula, a Junior Ranger program, etc. for K-6 grade school children in over thirty area elementary schools throughout Raleigh, Fayette, Nicholas, Summers and Monroe Counties and expands the program as staffing allows. The program also expands to include in-park conservation learning centers, increased educational opportunities for high school and college students, and expanded educational offerings via on-line learning and other media.

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Site: NERI

EDUCATION

☒ Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.

☒ Increase the number of web hits through the introduction of advanced, interactive features that attract young people to national parks.

Park websites and visitor centers offer young people and their families expanded opportunities to increase understanding and appreciation of park resources and the NPS mission via engaging, educational and participatory activities. The park partners with radio, video producers and other media to provide learning opportunities for all ages.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NERI

EDUCATION

☒ Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

☒ Enroll an additional two million children in the Junior Ranger program.

The park continues to provide a park-based Junior Ranger program, as well as expanding the program via developing on-line, active learning opportunities for all ages on park websites.

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Site: NERI

EDUCATION

☒ Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.

☒ Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.

The park continues to improve and expand services, exhibits, media, publications, and ranger-led programs to increase visitor opportunities for understanding and appreciation. Both personal and non-personal educational services are increased, as allowed by staffing levels.

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☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Park neighbors have expanded opportunities to understand, appreciate, and support the parks via a parkwide civic engagement and community outreach program that includes publications and newsletters, educational programs, and NPS involvement and partnership with community organizations towards meeting common goals.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NERI

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Promote a safety and health culture for all employees and visitors.

☒ Reduce the number of employee lost-time incidents and serious visitor injuries by 20 percent.

By 2016, reduce the number of employee lost-time incidents and serious visitor injuries by 20% at NERI, GARI and BLUE.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NERI

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Model what it means to work in partnership.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

By 2016, NERI, GARI and BLUE have developed successful partnerships, working with recreational users, gateway communities, state and local parks and others to preserve the region's natural and cultural resources and to educate the public about them. Partnerships are seen as necessary to carrying out the NPS mission, and we embrace them enthusiastically and productively.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NERI

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Make national parks the first choice in philanthropic giving among those concerned about environmental, cultural, and recreational values.

☒ Improve communications and marketing capacity to increase public understanding of our mission, opportunities, and benefits.

By 2016, NERI, GARI and BLUE have a large and well-managed Friends group that enhances the parks' mission through fund- and friend-raising.

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